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CARTER
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Former President Carter said Tuesday night his successor, Ronald Reagan, is making a mistake in refusing to enter negotiations to "alleviate tensions in the world."

With war threatening in the Middle East and Central America, deteriorating American-Soviet relations and an escalating arms race, Carter said Reagan is the only president in recent history to fail to engage in top-level negotiations with world leaders.

"A continuing responsibility of a president is to negotiate to try to alleviate tensions in the world," Carter told an audience of about 2,800 at Roanoke College.

Carter said his administration completed negotiations for the SALT II treaty to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and mediated peace talks in the Middle East.

"Reagan has personally placed negotiations at the bottom of his priority list," Carter said.

Earlier, Carter told reporters that alleged CIA participation in the mining of Nicaraguan harbors was illegal and "disgraceful."

Carter told a news conference before his speech that the White House decided to place itself above the authority of the World Court.

He called it "an unprecedented approach to international law and quite damaging to our country's reputation among nations."

Carter said he supported his former vice president, Walter Mondale, for the Democratic nomination. While Reagan uses his communication skills to escape blame for the mistakes of his administration, Mondale is an "an orthodox Democrat" who knows how to handle the controversial issues, Carter said.

Carter reserved his harshest criticism for recent reports that the CIA had directly supervised placing mines in Nicaraguan harbors. Carter said the reports, if true, further erode America's image as a moral leader.

"I think it's a disgraceful thing for our country to do," he said.

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